<u>REMARKS</u>

The present application was filed on July 26, 2001 with claims 1-22. Claims 1-22 remain pending in the application. Claims 1 and 19 are the independent claims.

Claims 1-5, 7-12 and 14-22 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,772,333 (hereinafter "Brendel") in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,774,668 (hereinafter "Choquier").

Claims 6 and 13 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Brendel and Choquier in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,611,498 (hereinafter "Baker").

Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the present application in view of the above amendments.

Independent claims 1 and 19 have each been amended to clarify that the configured information specifies a pre-assignment of different groups of session ID values to respective ones of the servers, with each of the servers being operative to assign session ID values from its associated one of the pre-assigned groups to sessions handled by that server. Support can be found in the specification at, for example, page 3, lines 2-6, page 6, lines 1-7, and page 7, lines 15-19, which describes one or more illustrative embodiments.

Applicants respectfully submit that there is no such pre-assignment of different groups of session ID values to different servers in the collective teachings of the cited references. For example, the Brendel reference teaches to use a conventional approach similar to that described at page 2, lines 20-24, of the present specification, in which for each SSL session, the load balancer lists the session ID of the session "along with a server assignment that identifies the server that generated the SSL session ID." See Brendel at lines 18-20 of the abstract. This is a direct teaching away from the pre-assignment of different groups of session ID values to different servers as recited in claims 1 and 19 as amended.
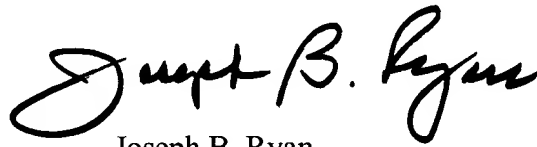
The Choquier and Baker references fail to supplement this fundamental deficiency of Brendel as applied to claims 1 and 19 as amended. The teachings in column 15, lines 22-50, of Choquier, for example, relate to use of "a randomization technique in selecting a server." Such random server selection is not only directly contrary to the claimed invention, but clearly

inapplicable to the Brendel approach in which the load balancer stores for each session ID a server assignment that identifies the server that generated the SSL session ID. Accordingly, the collective teachings of the applied references fail to meet the limitations of the claims, and there is no motivation for the proposed basic combination in view of the clear teachings away in Brendel and Choquier.

The dependent claims 2-18 and 20-22 are believed to define additional patentable subject matter relative to the cited references.

In view of the above, Applicants believe that claims 1-22 as amended are in condition for allowance, and respectfully request withdrawal of the §103(a) rejections.

Respectfully submitted,

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